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Forty-fifth session
Agenda item 79 (b)

DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION:
TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

Progress in the implementation of specific action related to the particular needs and problems of island developing countries

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

1. At the first part of its thirty-seventh session, the Trade and Development Board had before it, under agenda item 9 (e), the report of the Meeting of Governmental Experts of Island Developing Countries and Donor Countries and Organizations, 1/ copies of which will be made available to the General Assembly. Information concerning the meeting is contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/45/453).

2. At its 780th plenary meeting, on 12 October 1990, the Board took note of the report of the Meeting of Governmental Experts and decided that the comments made thereon should be transmitted to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session. The relevant comments are accordingly annexed hereto.

Notes

1/ A/CONF.147/5-TD/B/AC.46/4.

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ANNEX

Extract from the full report of the Trade and Development Board on the first part of its thirty-seventh session a/

Island developing countries

1. The representative of New Zealand, in the absence of the Chairman of the Meeting of Governmental Experts of Island Developing Countries and Donor Countries and Organizations, introduced the report of the meeting, which had been held from 25 to 29 June 1990. b/

2. The Chief of the Special Programme for Least Developed, Land-locked and Island Developing Countries, after outlining the documentation prepared for the meeting and the recommendations of the meeting, said that the Strategic Framework, which constituted the substantive outcome of the meeting, would form the basis for co-operation between the island developing countries and their development partners. The report of the meeting would be made available to the General Assembly.

3. The representative of Malta said that his delegation noted with satisfaction that in the Declaration on International Economic Co-operation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries, adopted by consensus at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly (see Assembly resolution S-18/3, annex), it had been agreed that the special development problems and needs of island developing countries should be addressed, in order to cope with the challenges of the 1990s.

4. As an island developing country, Malta appreciated the work done by the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to assist island developing countries. However, additional human and financial resources were necessary to address the problems of the island developing countries and to undertake the studies requested in the concluding part of chapter II of the report of the Meeting of Governmental Experts of Island Developing Countries and Donor Countries and Organizations, which should serve as the basis for future follow-up action in favour of island developing countries. In that regard, his delegation reiterated the proposal made by Malta during the meeting that a unit be set up within the UNCTAD secretariat to be the focal point for specific action at the global level in favour of island developing countries and to act as a catalyst in that regard, as called for in General Assembly resolution 43/189 of 20 December 1988. Finally, his delegation welcomed the convening of UNCTAD meetings of governmental experts and donors and organizations to review the developments in respect of island developing countries.

5. The representative of New Zealand said that the report of the Meeting of Governmental Experts of Island Developing Countries and Donor Countries and Organizations reflected the open and co-operative spirit evident in the growing partnership between donors and island developing countries. The meeting had achieved a forward-looking consensus report incorporating a strategic framework for the future consideration of island developing countries issues.

6. The South Pacific community was made up largely of island developing countries, and the problems facing those countries were well known to New Zealand. However, to the problems listed in the report must be added that of sea-level rise associated with climatic change. For many small islands, therefore, sustainable development was now charged with a whole new meaning. In that connection, he endorsed the call of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development for the environment/development relationship to be moved from the level of concept to that of practice, across the whole broad range of economic and policy areas. Addressing issues identified in the report of the meeting on island developing countries was a priority task for UNCTAD, working through or in conjunction with appropriate international agencies and regional organizations.

7. The representative of Australia fully endorsed the statements of the representative of New Zealand and the Chief of the Special Programme for Least-Developed, Land-locked and Island Developing Countries, particularly with regard to the concept of sustainable development. A number of island developing countries, including some of those in the Asia and Pacific region, were also least developed countries, and it was hoped that the idea of partnership emphasized at the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries would be extended to island developing countries as well.

8. The representative of France said that her country's position on the question of the venue of the meeting and on the substantive issues considered at the meeting was as reflected in the meeting's report. With regard to chapter II of the report, the term "strategic framework" should be translated as "cadre stratégique" in the French text.

9. The representative of Haiti said that, although the report of the meeting on island developing countries was excellent, the meeting had requested the UNCTAD secretariat to undertake an unrealistically large number of studies, not all of which were on topics specific to island developing countries. He therefore suggested, with reference to paragraph 52 of the report of the meeting, that priority should be given to the following studies: a periodic review of socio-economic performance of island developing countries, highlighting the factors that have led to success and shortcomings; review of appropriate indicators of social and economic progress, which take into account not only the level of gross national product but also other factors that relate to the high vulnerability of island developing countries; policies and measures that might mitigate the impact of natural disasters.

Notes

a/ For the report of the Trade and Development Board on the first part of its thirty-seventh session, see Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 15 (A/45/15).

b/ A/CONF.147/5-TD/B/AC.46/4.

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